

PAUL VOTES TO EASE TRADE RESTRICTIONS ON FARM SALES TO CUBA *Texas Farmers Benefit from Opening New Markets*

Washington, DC: Congressman Ron Paul voted this week to eliminate regulations that prevent Texas farmers from selling agricultural products to Cuba. Paul, along with more than 270 of his House colleagues, voted for an amendment to a farm bill that will allow private financing by American banks of agricultural sales to Cuba. This private financing is crucial for American farmers seeking to sell farm products in the cash-strapped Cuban marketplace.

"I applaud this important step toward opening the Cuban market to Texas farmers," Paul stated. "The current financing restrictions limit the practical benefits of a partial repeal of the Cuban trade embargo. Our farmers should not have to seek financing from foreign banks. This vote moves us closer to fully repealing the harmful Cuban trade embargo."

Paul noted that trade advisory groups estimate U.S. exports of food to Cuba could amount to \$400 million within five years. "Trade embargoes simply benefit foreign farmers, who increase their sales in markets closed to American farmers," Paul stated. "Rather than punishing our farmers with embargoes, Congress should be eliminating barriers so that they can sell farm products to new markets. Over one-third of U.S. agricultural production is exported, so farmers suffer disproportionately when trade restrictions are imposed."

Paul introduced legislation last year that would allow completely free trade, travel, and communication with Cuba, while banning any federal aid or subsidies to the island nation. "True free trade means no trade restrictions, sanctions, or tariffs, but also no corporate subsidies," Paul concluded. "Congress should be working toward a true free trade Cuban policy that benefits Texas farmers."